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THE JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY

BEAUTY AND INTERESTINGNESS

SINCE a statement of essentials clarifies later discussion I shall acknowledge at once that I can find no conception of aesthetic value as adequate as that contained in the idea that beauty is form. In the evolution of this idea, I think, is to be found the primary meaning of aesthetics. But to equate the terms "form" and "beauty" is not to reveal their meaning; in fact it reveals little or nothing about them. This meaning, however, can be quite clearly suggested by drawing a contrast between the qualities of form and interestingness. To this end, therefore, I shall consider the nature of these qualities, the relation between the two, and finally some pertinent implications that this relation has for the arts. The term "interestingness" here, it should be noted, signifies the power of an object to awaken responses other than those called forth by its aesthetic form. What these responses are will later be shown.

Form consists in a pattern of relationships that gives unity to a complex of perceptual elements. To it, as form, external reference is not relevant. Such reference may or may not be present; if it is present it is auxiliary and not essential. Form arises when sense elements are so combined as to present a felt unity. When this unity attains a degree of completeness that precludes further alteration it is said to be perfect, and is felt to embody a maximum of asethetic satisfaction. In a perfect instance of form, moreover, the parts are perfect as well as the whole. Everything is touched with a manifest inevitability. Even a fragment possesses a unique value of its own.

The broader characteristics of aesthetic form such as proportion, balance, rhythm, and dominance are commonly recognized and do not require intensive description, nor do, at this point, the more subtle ones such as mediating gradations of values. All of these characters are different but compatible cases of the harmonization of contrasts. The contrasts or differences give a sense of variation; the harmony, a sense of unity. Or, as in color composition, a contrast in one dimension may be counterbalanced by a harmony in another, as a contrast of values by a harmony of hues, or a contrast

of hues by a harmony of values. Form is a product of the deft interplay of harmonies and contrasts.

But these harmonies and contrasts would be impossible without distinctness of qualities within a given sense. And this has a special meaning for art. The arts, as products of man, are limited to the senses possessed by him, and although these senses yield a large variety of arts, all of the arts fall within the domains of sight and hearing. Sight and hearing are the only senses that give distinct qualities, and such qualities alone are susceptible to unification into form. The fact that the arts are confined to qualities derived from these senses is therefore significant, for it is a very definite indication that the essence of art is form. Outside of these senses aesthetic form is not possible. Each art, to be sure, employs its own array of perceptual qualities. But whatever these may be—tones or hues, intensities or pitches—their respective variations are distinct and fall into a natural range or order, and hence can be perceptually compared with one another. Such comparison gives a sense of measured likeness and difference. For the reason, then, that these variations are ordered—as in the range of pitches, or in the circle of hues—their interrelations can be discerned and the compositional unities that contain them can be felt.

In proportion, on the other hand, as sense qualities are indistinct, as those of smell or taste, the possibility of art is diminished. Form arises from the juxtaposing of felt differences into a unity, and where the differences are indiscernible and unrelated, form vanishes into mere blending. We can not derive music from quarter tones since we can not distinguish them, nor can we make symphonies out of smells. To the degree that the perceptions of an organism are indistinct, an art or an aesthetics for that type of organism is not possible. However, were we to conceive creatures with human or supra-human intelligence whose range of senses—senses that yield distinct qualities—was greater than ours, such creatures would have not only more arts than we do, but, as a consequence, a more extended aesthetics. Corresponding to every type of such creature there would be a different aesthetics, just as, in one sense of the term, there is a special aesthetics for sight and a different aesthetics for hearing. As many different possible aesthetics, then, might be posited as there are possible beings with different senses—senses that yield distinct qualities. And these would include not only our own aesthetics but all possible aesthetics. Now the question may be asked: Would all of these aesthetic orders be separate and unrelated, or would they have a foundational aesthetics in common of which each would be a special modification? From the present view the latter would be the case; for within

the range of its special sense-qualities each aesthetics would be concerned with the form, the harmonization of contrasts, within those qualities, and the aesthetics of form would be ultimate; it would be common to all. It would be the foundational aesthetics of which the others were special applications. It would be pure aesthetics, and would include the most generalized principles of aesthetic form.

I say, then, that beauty is form, but I am not much disposed to argue about connotations of the term "beauty." The name is one that in practice possesses a variety of reference, and a dispute as to who shall assume the exclusive right to it is hardly worth raising. The point is, rather, that in certain objects a character is discerned that, in a special and disinterested way, fixates, lifts, and engrosses the mind. That character is form. When men go about to name the quality that has this effect they as a rule call it beauty, and in so doing they consciously or unconsciously identify beauty with form.

Psychological reasons exist why form should produce this effect. The study of them is the psychology of aesthetics. This study, however, is not aesthetics itself. Aesthetics is the study of the form that produces the effects, and is concerned only in a secondary way with the reasons for them. Just as there were music and the study of musical forms long before the psychology of these forms was understood (in fact it is not yet completely understood) and just as there were poetry and the study of poetic forms long before there was a psychology of poetry, so, in general, aesthetics, or the study of aesthetic form, is different from, and may long precede, the study of the psychological grounds for the effects of such form. In fact we may know that certain forms are effective without knowing why they are effective, and the latter may never be known. Until aesthetics, moreover, distinguishes the forms, a psychology of them is hardly possible. The psychological reasons for the influence of form may be found in the concentration of attention and consequent self-oblivion facilitated by the centralizing unity of form; or in economy of attention induced by form; or in the satisfaction accompanying the successful effort towards perceptual unification; or in the smoothness that comes from a felt absence of confusion; or in empathic responses; or in many other factors not yet discovered. But irrespective of the explanations brought forth to account for the circumstance, the circumstance itself appears to be constant, namely, that form is the origin of aesthetic value.

Leaving now the topic of form, we may turn to that of interestingness. The term "interestingness" is general in reference but

it is none the less definite. It is a psychological term and here refers to the stimulating power of an object apart from its form; as, for example, food is interesting to a hungry man, or a photograph of a beloved to a lover, or a painting because of some familiar or exciting presentation. All such interestingness has to do with external relations of the object perceived. Although the sources from which it arises are numberless, the most significant of them can be readily distinguished. They may be designated as follows: (1) Appetitive appeal. (2) Emotional appeal. Either of these may, and often does, involve interest arising from associations with past experiences. (3) Representation, including imitation. (4) Expressiveness, i.e., the power of expressing something extraneous to the form. (5) Content or meaning, i.e., a subject referred to, no matter how well or ill expressed; for example, a conception of man, or of the world, or of an imaginary event, or of an historical event. (6) Usefulness or instrumentality.

These subjects have been extensively treated in aesthetic theory. One of them however, i.e., expressiveness, warrants further discussion. This trait has probably excited more difference of opinion than any or all of the others; a circumstance due partly to the emphasis placed upon it and partly to the fact that the term "expressiveness" has many meanings—meanings that are not always sufficiently distinguished. A proponent may speak of it in one sense; an opponent in another. The resulting discussion is not exceptionally enlightening. Where expression is present, it is said, there is something that is expressed, and something by means of which it is expressed. The content (a feeling, a perception, a thought, a meaning) is that which is expressed; the work of art is that through which it is expressed. If there is nothing to express, says this view, then there is no work of art. If there is something to express and it is badly expressed then the work of art is defective, or it is not a work of art at all. If the content is satisfactorily expressed then the work embodies true art. Art, it is said, is successful expression. This means that apart from expression art is impossible. But there evidently is art, as, for example, design, that does not express any content in this way. There are, moreover, works of art which, if they do express any content, leave the content indeterminable. The answer to these objections is that if anyone derives feeling of any kind from a proposed work of art, *that* is its expressiveness *for* him, and the expressiveness of the work may be as various as the different individuals who contemplate it. This argument seems to be mostly casuistry, for the term "expressiveness" has changed its meaning several times and has become all but meaningless.

What, then, are the meanings of the term "expressiveness"? They may be divided into at least four classes as follows: First, intrinsic and extrinsic expressiveness. Intrinsic expressiveness is simply the felt quality of the perceptual object itself, as illustrated by the difference in feeling between a broken line and a smooth curve. Extrinsic expressiveness is present in the portrayal of something outside of the perceptual object, as, for example, a battle scene, a person, a flower, or any represented subject. Intrinsic expressiveness again is divided into two kinds: the feeling for the medium and the feeling for the form. The first is illustrated by the difference between the feeling for line in etching and that for hue in painting; the second by the difference in feeling between a mediated and an unmediated contrast, or between a simple and a complex rhythm, or between symmetrical and asymmetrical balance, or between balance and non-balance. Extrinsic expressiveness is also divided into two kinds: representation and symbolism. Within symbolism is included allegory. In this analysis expressiveness falls into the following types: intrinsic expressiveness arising from medium or from form; extrinsic expressiveness arising from representation or from symbolism.

Now it is manifest that anything whatsoever possesses intrinsic expressiveness of some kind. Everything, whether a work of art or not—as, for example, the melancholy wail of a distant locomotive whistle—has its own especial "feel." Hence the mere having of expressiveness in this sense is not sufficient to distinguish a work of art from other objects. If a distinction is here sought it must refer to the kind of expressiveness involved, not to expressiveness itself. If expressiveness, then, is to be used as a differentiating character of art, the type of expressiveness referred to must be extrinsic expressiveness. But such a view is very dubious as we shall hereafter see. However, if neither kind of expressiveness can provide such a differentiating feature then it follows that art can not be explained in terms of expressiveness. It may or may not have expressiveness, but this is not its distinguishing mark. And it is clear that this result is related to the aesthetic meaning of interestingness. For, although intrinsic expressiveness pertains to form, extrinsic expressiveness is a type of interestingness. How aesthetically significant or non-significant this second type of expressiveness is may be seen in examining form and interestingness as conjoined in a work of art.

Such a conjunction is highly significant from one point of view, but of doubtful value from another. From the so-called "human" view it is paramount; from the standpoint of aesthetics it is secondary. Beauty, as form, is extraneous to interestingness. But

interestingness generates a certain kind of significance; it arouses the impulses, enlivens the sympathies, activates the emotional associations, and in general connects the object with what is called life, i.e., the conative life of the experiencing subject. Now if the view is maintained that no art is conceivable except art that possesses this kind of psychological appeal, then interestingness is as important, if not more important, for it than form. For it is not probable that men will concern themselves with what does not attach to their common feelings, and they will place emphasis on what consciously stimulates them rather than on what unconsciously holds them. It is true also that men will probably never be satisfied with an art that dispenses with interestingness, since the appreciation of form can scarcely compete with vividness of desires or excitation of the emotions. But whether this indicates a property of art or a limitation of men is another question. I shall consider elsewhere the relative values of form and interestingness. At present something may be said of the ways in which the two complement one another and of the ways in which they are opposed.

With respect to their complementary aspects: form gives beauty; interestingness gives emotional or conceptual meaningfulness; and it is said that the union of the two, when they merge without discrepancy, produces a psychologically meaningful form. This yields a number of distinctions for art. Greater art, *ceteris paribus*, is distinguished from lesser art in terms of its subject matter, and subject matter is taken to be the key to significance. What a work of art suggests is distinguished from what it is, and its form becomes an instrumentality for its message. From this point of view, without a message its interestingness and hence its significance vanishes. Art, in this view, is essentially a presentation of what lies beyond it, and it provides a channel through which meanings flow into the mind. Aesthetics becomes the psychology of interestingness, and art, the vehicle of communication. However valid or invalid this conception may be, it suggests once more the circumstance that art, as generally understood, can not easily transcend interestingness.

But there is perhaps a more pertinent way in which form and interestingness interact. Granted that some representation is to be made or some function is to be accomplished, a form may be discovered adaptable to the purpose intended. An added quality of form is thus attained, and the object is enhanced by a supplementary unity, the unity of form and content or of form and function. This in itself has an aesthetic meaning, but when real is essentially that of the enlargement of form. The qualification "when real" is necessary, for a common notion prevails that a

physical shape, when it agrees with a function, acquires by this fact itself an aesthetic form. This, however, is doubtful. The function, to be sure, limits the variety of shapes that can be used, but there is no guiding necessity that makes each of these shapes aesthetically satisfactory, nor is there any necessity that makes one of the shapes more perfect than another. A pitcher may pour fluids though it possesses but trivial aesthetic value, and a roof may shed water even if it is a visual nuisance. Form and instrumentality do not inevitably conflict but neither do they necessarily coalesce. There is no pre-established harmony between them, however true it may be that given a representation to be achieved, or a function to be performed, the resultant form can not be conceived independently of them.

If in the foregoing considerations interestingness combined with form may concur with the aesthetic meaning of an object, there is no lack of cases in which it has the opposite effect. When the form is sacrificed to interestingness, or when interestingness diverts attention from the form, the composition falls apart or is neglected; and when the interest becomes old, the object becomes obsolete. If interestingness is what gives art emotional meaning (and this is not wholly true, for, as we have seen, all form has intrinsic expressiveness) it is also that which destroys it as art in any intelligible sense. There may be a pattern of attractions in a painting which, through representative elements, enters into the composition as a whole. But then the interestingness maintains itself only in so far as it can take on the characters of form. An object may be merely interesting, or both beautiful and interesting, or finally, intrinsically beautiful. Only the two latter have any aesthetic significance, and within the terminology here used this fact reaffirms the point of the present study, namely, the primacy of form.

The primacy of form is indicated through the basic consideration that interestingness, say in the guise of representation or function, if without form is aesthetically null. But form without interestingness as, for example, in music or in color composition, is always valuable and may be of exceptional beauty. Pure form in pattern design, so far as the extent of its influence is concerned, probably does more to enhance the sensuous present with felt beauty than all of the more pretentious arts together. Pattern design is everywhere and sometimes appears with the rarest effects. However, even where representation occurs the representation must be touched by the transforming magic of design before it takes on value. The argument then converges to this: What can be relinquished is not essential; what can not be relinquished is.

But interestingness in its various divisions can be relinquished without relinquishing beauty, and this is not true of form. Take form away and the beauty vanishes; attain form and beauty is present. Nor does it make any difference how intrinsically great the subject of representation, divine or human, may be; if the form is wanting, the art disappears. Interestingness is, in truth, a concession to our psychological limitations—to the particularities of our mode of existence or to the obtuseness of our discerning powers. For the most part the interesting seizes the focus of attention whereas form is sensed unconsciously, and to the one is attributed the value of which the other is the source. A certain pleasure is aroused in recognizing the familiar in unfamiliar settings and we scan works of art with the curiosity of solving puzzles. While this occurs interestingness may beckon the attention to pass through a series of scenes or related figures that suggest through their interconnections some semblance of form. In this way it is an allurement that may lead to beauty, but it is not beauty itself; it attracts, but in so doing it also clouds the vision. And since it is associated with the obvious, whereas form may be latent, it is often invoked to explain what, in fact, it conceals.

Now the recognition of the primacy of form in relation to interestingness brings the solution, or the beginning of the solution, of many aesthetic problems. The detail of these problems can not here be examined. But it may be of some value to indicate certain recurrent theses which, if the present view is accepted, must be distinguished as fallacies. Practically all of these fallacies are due to the non-observance of the aesthetic irrelevance of subject matter—an irrelevance that persists irrespective of any importance that subject matter may have for interestingness. The fallacies are as follows:

First, that it is essential to art to give information about life or history or individual persons or anything else. Art *may* do this but it is not essential to it; nor is an art necessarily estimable when it does this, nor trivial when it does not. Art is the presentation of form, and its function is to awaken a sense and feeling for form. In this way it gives a great deal of information about and appreciation of the value in the perceptual world. It will show the fundamental characters of form, and unnumbered instances of special forms, but with factual information about particular subject matters it is not concerned. It will not show you the mystical meanings of natural history nor the inner workings of plants, animals, or men. You can not fill the gaps in your knowledge of plant

physiology by looking at paintings, nor will you necessarily find the secrets of the human soul revealed in poetry. In plain fact there is no little nonsense about human nature in poetry, and the nonsense does not, by necessity, make the poetry bad, nor the truth make it good. Art is not philosophy, and only those aesthetically blind would try to make it such.

Along with what may be called the informational fallacy—a fallacy which in truth is nothing but a superficial intellectualism intruding itself into the domain of sensibility, and attempting to turn the sense of form into external cognition and to transform art into a kind of universal encyclopedia—along with this fallacy goes the notion that the function of art is to express, interpret, or to represent nature. Art may or may not reveal aspects of nature, especially aesthetic aspects, but this again is irrelevant to its character as art. The circumstance, for example, that a design includes acanthus leaves makes it in no way more aesthetically significant than a purely geometrical design. In fact it is very likely to deflect attention from the form to the representation. If a perfect form issuing from the combination of perceptual elements is attained, then art has reached its goal, and whatever is subjoined by way of extrinsic information is an addendum and not an essential. Nor is it necessary that the artist should derive his inspiration from nature; it is a matter of inconsequence from what source the inspiration comes, since in the end it is the form that is the goal. If form is attained, value is present intrinsically; if not, the source of inspiration will not throw a perfecting light on it. Nature is, it is true, filled with forms, or the suggestions of form, from which the artist may select; but the constructive imagination also is no infertile source of forms, and from these many perfections may be drawn. Art lifts the mind out of nature as much as it immerses it therein, and the artist may not so much imitate or even interpret nature as present another nature of his own.

We come now to a pair of fallacies closely allied to those indicated. On the one hand the view is proposed that the essence of art is the revelation of the universal; on the other that it is the revelation of the particular. There is practically nothing, in fact, in the whole scheme of things, or in the conscious or the subconscious, the revelation of which some school has not proclaimed to be a function of art. All of these claims are fallacies of subject matter; all are derivatives of the notion that art must be informative in a non-aesthetic way. All are based on the supposition that form is meaningful only in so far as it conveys knowledge.

Consider first the contention that art exhibits the universal.

The point of this conception is that art somehow makes manifest the essential natures of things, eliminating and refining away their accidental qualities. This view was persuasively but speciously developed by Schopenhauer, among others, who, in terms of it, ranged the arts according to their subject matter. The simplest criticism of the theory is that, in the application of its criterion, if a proposed work of art does not convey the notion of a universal it is not really art; if it does, it is. Now ask what universal an egg-and-dart design reveals. It shows nothing notably significant about eggs or darts. But, it may be said, it shows spatial relations. This of course it does. It shows *some* spatial relations, and those of a very limited kind; but what spatial objects, it may be asked, do not show spatial relations? Very well then, it is not art. Now it may not be; nevertheless the Athenian artist placed a high value on it. Was he interested in revealing universals? No, he was interested in realizing a comparatively simple but finely felt articulation of contrasted spherical and linear elements that the special aesthetic situation demanded. In other words he was interested in form, and any universals that might concomitantly be revealed were aesthetically irrelevant. To what lengths the theory of art as a medium for knowledge can be pushed is suggested by Schopenhauer's exaltation of Raphael and Correggio as painters who carried their art to its greatest achievement, as evidenced by the wisdom that shone from the eyes of their subjects.[1] It would be difficult to force the subject-matter fallacy to a more fanciful aberration. The only thing, in truth, essential for art to reveal is itself, that is, aesthetic form in the arrangement of perceptual elements, and subject matter is pertinent only as it lends itself to this end. But it must be added that the meaning of such form is in no way insignificant. It is one of the few intimations of perfection granted to the apprehension of men.

The other branch of the misconception with which we are dealing is the thesis that the essence of art is the revelation of the particular. This in turn takes two forms that may be designated as the revelation of the external character of the particular, and that of the internal or "real" nature of the particular. The former is realism, and no necessity here arises to repeat the already ample criticism of this position. Realism is a naïve appeal to interestingness and to the delight in the recognition of imitative detail. Few realistic artists, however, have the hardihood to carry out their view with any great consistency, for they select and modify,

[1] Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Idea*, Book III, par. 48.

consciously or unconsciously, according to the demands of their design and contrary to the facts they are reproducing, and thus, in one way or another, evade the starkness or the infelicities that would result from their canon. This applies as well to portraitists in the school as to others.

The alternative form of the realistic view holds that an individual is unanalyzable perceptually or intellectually owing to its uniqueness, and can be apprehended only by a penetrating ray of intuition. The function of art, according to this view, is to activate intuitions with this power. Now that some men have such intuitions we need neither affirm nor deny. Irrespective of the feeling of certainty that accompanies the intuitions it is very hard to tell whether they are valid or invalid since verification is impossible. Granted, however, that intuitions of this nature exist, there is no reason to attribute to them the character of art unless they are expressed through adequate form. And in that case it is not the intuitions but the form that constitutes the art. That some artists, as well as others, have such intuitions may be true, but that aesthetic competence consists in this capacity is not, from the fact itself, to be inferred. The presence of intuition alone, whatever may be its efficacy, will in no sense compensate for the lack of adequate form in its presentation.

Here it may be said in general with reference to the various schools of art, that schools which define themselves in terms of subject matter are irrelevant. Those that differentiate themselves in terms of form are significant. Not significant, however, as having attained the one and only type of form adequate to art, but as representative of the respective ways in which form may be achieved. Hence in distinguishing the significance of a school it is necessary to ask what *differentiae* it establishes between itself and others. If these *differentiae* are based primarily on subject matter then the school, in all probability, represents simply another way to attract attention, and however startling, odd, exotic, or bizarre, or, on the other hand, however purposely modest and commonplace its presentations, it provides no genuine change or notable advance. If, however, it is a new development in form, its potentialities are probably meaningful and may be epochal.

We now pass to a further type of fallacy resulting from emphasis on subject matter, namely, the notion that the essential function of art is to express the times. This is a social theory of art and is characterized likewise by an almost complete oblivion to the essence of art as form. That art does express the times, either by

intention or inadvertently, goes without saying, as do industry, commerce, science, journalism, philosophy, and many other human activities. But this is incidental to it and not of its essence. Art, as a matter of fact, is always aiming to transcend its times much rather than to picture them, and to reach those perfections of form that are timeless in the sense that they are appreciable in any period while men have eyes to see or ears to hear. Historical reasons may exist, but there are no essential aesthetic reasons, why such forms may not be realized at any time rather than at a special time. The forms are there to be attained whether the conditions of the times permit such attainment or not. Art may express the times but even if it did not it would none the less be significant for its inherent value. An old Mexican vase may be quite different, nationally and temporally, from a Minoan jar, but with respect to their compositional features they may be remarkably similar, and even structures so disparate in outward appearance and cultural setting as the Parthenon and the Taj Mahal nevertheless are discerned to possess intrinsic affinities of design.[2] The aesthetic meaning of these objects is not determined by their temporal relations but by the value of the form achieved in their design. They would in fact be just as valuable if made yesterday as they are, having been made when they were.

If the reflection of the times, then, is a by-product and not the essence of art, much less so is the expression of the various movements for social control that perpetually agitate the world. The adherents of these movements endeavor to appropriate the name of art for the expressions they give to their social systems, and they call these expressions art rather than by their correct name, i.e., propaganda. But art is one sphere at least to which this sort of system-spinning is not relevant, and it is a matter of perfect indifference to it whether men are conservatives or radicals, individualists or communists. Aesthetic form is happily unaffected by the vagaries of men, and although interestingness changes with the wind of opinion, form, though it may be artificially conjoined with any species of propaganda, is, in fact, independent of them all. A critic, finally, who can not see form, if present, in content he otherwise deplores has already compromised or lost his critical powers.

Last, it may be pointed out that from the view here expressed it is a fallacy to assert that art is indissolubly associated with ex-

[2] See Helen Gardner, *Understanding the Arts* (New York, Harcourt, Brace, 1932), p. 111.

trinsic function; that what, in short, is not functional is not art. The point is not that function or utility is incompatible with art but that it is irrelevant to it. Art enters into life in so far as form is consciously or unconsciously felt, and if it is not felt, to that extent it does not enter into life. But this has nothing to do with its nature or its value. It is worth having whether it is actually possessed or not. And it may or may not be compresent with function. From this view both of the following attitudes are fallacious: (1) that art somehow has to be connected with practical life, (2) that art can not be connected with practical life. Neither is necessary, but it is obvious that the more it informs the processes of practical life the richer that life becomes. In this case, however, practical life is enhanced by art, not art by practicality. And as a corollary to this it should be said that the distinction between fine and applied art must also be considered a superfluity. Wherever form is present aesthetic quality is present also, whether the form is connected with a function or not. The essential thing is not the presence or absence of function, but the presence of form. Convenience may dictate the distinction of fine and applied art but such a distinction has no essential aesthetic foundation.

These, then, are some of the recurring views that must be recognized as fallacies if art is considered as form. If it is not so considered but is identified with subject matter and with interestingness they are not fallacies. But in that case little meaning attaches to aesthetics as an independent study, for aesthetics becomes another branch of psychology, and as diffuse as the varieties of interestingness are diffuse. If art is form it has an inner unity, and it exemplifies a common norm; but if it is interestingness, or dependent on interestingness, it separates into a thousand diverse processes with no essential, but with merely adventitious, relations among them. Form and interestingness may be compresent; they are nevertheless distinct, and an aesthetics that confuses them will follow different and divergent criteria. In proportion as such an aesthetics develops the more inner conflicts it will reveal, and in attempting to clarify its judgments it will simply exhibit their incongruity. But its effect on art would be brief or insignificant. Art is not dependent for its development on aesthetic theory. It has its own way of unfolding and its own value to attain, and to this value, the realization of form, it instinctively moves.

FRANCIS S. HASEROT

WILLIAMSBURG, VA.

COMMENTS AND CRITICISM

FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF THE AESTHETIC WORK OF ART

Professor Nathan Berall's careful examination, in a recent issue of this JOURNAL,[1] of the description of the aesthetic work of art offered in my Supplementary Essay to *The Basis of Criticism in the Arts* provides a good opportunity to press that study a step further. I should not wish to say that a work of art is the only aesthetic object. Natural objects, states of revery, and the like, are also objects of aesthetic value. But the kind of aesthetic object on which the principal problems of criticism pivot is unquestionably the work of art. It is the evaluation of a picture by El Greco or Picasso or a poem by T. S. Eliot that particularly stimulates the critical interest. And the question arises just what is it that is the object of evaluation in such instances. We call it a work of art. What is a work of art?

Not nearly the attention has been given to this object that it deserves. We can turn to many analyses of the common object of perception, and of the scientific object, but apart from typical organistic references to the work of art as an organic whole of feelings or the more casual reference to it as the stimulus of aesthetic experiences, there is little to be found on the subject.

The Supplementary Essay amounts to a succession of approximations towards an adequate description and definition of this object. Professor Berall is quite right in pointing out that there are a number of contradictions to be found in the study. To those he has enumerated I will even add a couple more. And now, with the benefit of his criticisms and those of other men with whom I have discussed the problem, I shall try to make a still closer approximation to an adequate and consistent description of this object.

The first outstanding conditions to be noticed as requirements for the determination of a work of art as an object of aesthetic evaluation are:

A. A set of physical stimuli, ordinarily a physical continuant like canvas and pigments for a picture, or a printed page for a poem. I have called this the *physical work of art.*

B. One or more spectators who also are physical (and, in some added sense, psychological) continuants.

C. Perceptual responses of the spectator to the physical work of art. The introspective content of these responses is sensations,

[1] Nathan Berall, "A Note on Professor Pepper's Aesthetic Object," this JOURNAL, Vol. XLVIII, No. 24, November 22, 1951, pp. 750–754.

images, meanings, and feelings—whatever has been aroused in the spectator as a result of stimulation by the physical work of art. What may be roughly indicated as an instance of such a response, I will symbolize as a perception, "P". The aesthetic experience is obviously to be found in P. The content of a perception, it would be widely agreed, is the object of immediate aesthetic experience provided it meets with certain aesthetic requirements which bring it within the aesthetic field. We need not stop here to consider these requirements, for they are indifferent to our problem so long as they are applicable to the content of a spectator's perception. For instance, the requirement that the perception be a consummatory satisfaction is a very common one in contemporary aesthetics. The content of such a perception would clearly be an object of aesthetic value, so far as it met with the requirements of aesthetic perception. Suppose we call this the *object of aesthetic perception.*

Now, it will be observed that the object of aesthetic perception can not be directly identified with the work of art. For it usually takes a number of perceptions "of a work of art," as we say, for a critic to get the experience from which he could develop a responsible judgment of the aesthetic value of the work. So, the work of art which is the object of the critic's evaluative judgment is not whatever aesthetic perception he may happen to have at the time, but something different. This fact comes out whenever anyone remarks that he heard so-and-so's composition but has not yet had a chance to appreciate it fully, since he knows he missed a lot that was in it. The speaker here is clearly distinguishing between two kinds of aesthetic object—the object of his immediate perception just past, and the work of art, which he has yet to appreciate fully.

Can this second object be identified with the physical work of art? Not literally as the physical continuant unless this is enlarged to include in its characterization not only its purely physical traits which stimulate the spectator's sense organs but also a set of dispositional properties. The content of these dispositional properties would be the perceptual content of the object of critical evaluation which we are seeking. But even then a distinction would have to be made between the purely physical characters of the physical work of art which maintain it as a physical continuant and as a stimulus agent, and the dispositional properties just mentioned which are the potentialities of some sort of perceptual content. For clarity, let us, for the present at least, restrict the physical work of art to its set of physical properties and keep these dispositional properties referring to possibilities of perception in a

separate group. Then it is quite clear that the physical work of art as mere stimulus object is not the object of critical evaluation.

We need a separate name, then, for the object of aesthetic evaluation. Let us call it the *aesthetic work of art*. Hereupon it becomes clear that the aesthetic work of art has some sort of specific reference to the materials of aesthetic perception. It is not the physical work of art strictly defined. It must be found among perceptual material. But at the same time it can not be identified with the object of aesthetic perception as already defined, since this is simply the content of any single immediate aesthetic experience. So, here we find the limits within which the problem should reach its solution. And now let me list the various statements explicitly or implicitly made in the Supplement towards this solution:

1. The aesthetic work of art is a perceived object.
2. It is a total perceptive series of a single spectator.
3. It is the final funded perception of a perceptive series in a single spectator.
4. It is the perception of all the relevant details experienced by a single spectator.
5. It is the set of the total perceptive series of indefinitely many spectators.
6. It is the common object of the many spectators, in this sense, that it is that upon or toward which the many perceptive series of the many spectators converge.

Numbers 1, 2, 5, and 6 are the four Professor Berall points out. I think it can be seen that the six points in this sequence are working up to something. And this is just about the sequence in which they emerge in the Supplementary Essay. But just what is it they are working up to? This is what we are seeking as the aesthetic work of art. And this was not unambiguously determined in the Supplementary Essay.

Let us look more closely at this succession of statements. The first one observes that the aesthetic work of art must refer specifically to the content of perception. But in view of all the succeeding statements, it can not be identified with the object of aesthetic perception literally. And in view of statements 5 and 6, it is possible that it is not to be identified with the content of any actual perception experienced by a single spectator.

Statement 2 refers to the observation that it requires a number of perceptions to guarantee a full appreciation of an aesthetic work of art.

Statement 3 calls attention to the fact that earlier perceptions are remembered and their content funded in later perceptions so that it is possible after familiarity with a work of art to obtain a very rich perception of its content. It may take many preliminary discriminating perceptions to discover the details open to appreciation in a work of art, but through funding these may all register in a mature perception. Such a mature funded perception by an experienced spectator is often regarded by him and by others as the complete intuition of the aesthetic work of art. Without disparagement of such a perception, for its content is the most valuable object of aesthetic perception a spectator can attain, it can not be literally identified with the aesthetic work of art, if statements 4, 5, and 6 are pertinent. That is to say, even the most mature perception of an experienced spectator may omit to fund some relevant details and may include some irrelevancies.

Statement 4 calls attention to the fact that everything that stimulates a spectator while in the presence of a physical work of art is not necessarily relevant to the work. Frames, pedestals, stages are among the most obvious physical conventions for determining what is and is not relevant for aesthetic perception. But actually most of what is meant by aesthetic discrimination is the determination of relevancy. This is what every book on empirical aesthetics mainly deals with. Relevance is verifiable by two main procedures, by determining the sensory materials directly stimulated by the physical work of art, and by cross references of the associative meanings among the imaginative materials generated by the physical work of art. Principles of composition, design, pattern, type are among the means by which relevancy is determined. When any previously unobserved detail is shown to a spectator to be relevant, it is immediately regarded as part of the content of the aesthetic work of art. The aesthetic work of art is thus implicitly described as the totality of relevant details. But as statement 5 indicates, no single spectator can be quite sure that he has, or is capable of appreciating, all the relevant details.

Statement 5 calls attention to the need of other spectators to check up on the blind spots which any single spectator may have. To take an extreme case, a color blind spectator is obviously incapable of discriminating the relevant hues of a visual work of art. But everybody has his blind spots—not only sensory deficiencies, but emotional inhibitions, and intellectual shortcomings such as not understanding cultural references relevant to a work of art coming from an unfamiliar environment. At this point we have definitely stepped outside the area of the object of an actual

aesthetic perception. The aesthetic work of art is now seen as a construct. It is an ideal object of aesthetic perception. But its content is nonetheless describable and verifiable. It is, to approach it one way, the mature funded perception of an experienced spectator checked and amplified where necessary with similar perceptions of other experienced spectators.

It may be asked why the intentions of the artist are not referred to at this point. This is a frequently proposed solution. But there are two objections to it: first, the difficulty in discovering what were the intentions of the artist; second, and more decisive, the fact that an aesthetic work of art may contain details of aesthetic value which the artist was not aware of. The test of relevancy is not primarily the intention of the artist, though, when this can be obtained, it is often most significant evidence. The test of relevancy is to be found in the mature perceptions of discriminating spectators.

We are now close to an identification of the aesthetic work of art. It is not an object of actual perception, but what may be called a dispositional object. It is an extrapolation from the funded object of aesthetic perception in any one spectator to such an object conceived as containing all the relevant details.

Statement 6 is a reference to a tendency among spectators to agree on the relevancy of details in an aesthetic work of art in proportion as their experience develops. At least, the reasons for disagreement become clear so that the relevancy of the reasons can be judged. In the Supplementary Essay I called this the "convergence effect." There are, of course, plenty of striking apparent exceptions to it. This is not the place to argue the matter out. But insofar as verifiable statements can be made about the configuration of relevant details open to discriminating perception, these constitute a reference to the content of the aesthetic work of art. It is not necessary that this content be unambiguous. There may be several equally relevant interpretations of a given work. This complicates the description of the aesthetic work of art but does not render it self-contradictory. The aesthetic work of art is, then, the collection of its relevant interpretations. There would still be plenty of irrelevant interpretations. One of the functions of aesthetic criticism in works like those of music and drama where the object of aesthetic perception involves the coöperation of a composer and an interpretive artist is to judge the relevancy of the interpretation.

On the basis of these observations, I now offer the following description of an aesthetic work of art: it is *a dispositional object*

based on the objects of aesthetic perception stimulated by a physical work of art, and is an extrapolation from these to the conception of a funded perception (or, where necessary, the collection of funded perceptions) which contains all the aesthetically relevant details. If one wishes to give this object a space-time locus, he can attach it to the physical work of art and regard the aesthetic work of art as a set of dispositional properties belonging to the physical work of art. For, of course, it is the physical work of art which is the instrument controlling the perception of the aesthetic work of art.

I am not yet sure that this is an entirely satisfactory description of the aesthetic work of art, as the object of critical evaluation. But it appears to me a closer approximation than I was able to offer at the time I wrote the Supplementary Essay.

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COMMENT

It has been long since we have seen a paper from the able pen of Professor William Pepperell Montague.[1] In the November twenty-second issue of this JOURNAL Victor Yarros takes exception to certain points.[2] As a defender of logical positivism he would, of course, see things differently from one for whom philosophy is "vision," and a mediation between the Lebensanschauung of literature and the Weltanschauung of empirical science, to borrow a phrase from Morris Cohen. Mr. Yarros writes, "What men have fought and died for in the past is not relevant to our situation." This is in reference to Professor Montague's appeal for a recognition of the wider issues and values that were so long central in the thought of the world's great thinkers. Perhaps these profounder human issues men "have suffered and lived for" are peripheral to those who would limit the realm of meaning to what is purely empirical and measurable. It is just this narrowness that is criticized.

One must agree with Victor Yarros that things change, "Traditions are not eternal." This very thing bids us take thought. Our heritage of human values and tradition of intellectual freedom are not to be taken for granted as something secure and immutable. The issues for which great thinkers of the past fought are indeed

[1] Montague, W. P., "The Modern Distemper of Philosophy," this JOURNAL, Vol. XLVIII, No. 14, July 5, 1951, pp. 429–435.

[2] Yarros, Victor S., "Truth or Meaning?," this JOURNAL, Vol. XLVIII, No. 24, November 22, 1951, pp. 754–755.

relevant to our present situation. Surely a teacher of political science will concede this, on further thought. I am sure that is Professor Montague's point. He is not unmindful of the merits of semantics and logic. But for my part I feel semantics needs philosophy more than philosophy needs semantics. And as for logic it is not without its ardent witnesses among the philosophers. Even among the older, more orthodox idealists we find eminent students of logic.

Professor Montague feels that logical positivists overlook the epistemological distinction made by William James between knowledge by description and knowledge by acquaintance. He refers to their tendency to evade a question by simply saying it no longer has a valid meaning, "that it lacks any significance." It is difficult to deal with that type of mentality. Professor Montague gives as an example the way such a person would handle the question "Do you believe in God?" by denying meaning to it. Mr. Yarros's rejoinder is: "We are entitled to ask the believer in God just what the term means to *him.*" I'm sure Professor Montague would not quarrel with that. His objection is "not to a healthy denial of the *truth* of certain traditional convictions but to a smug and disingenuous denial of their *meaning.*" And of course Mr. Yarros's remark implies that the proposition in question does not have meaning.

For Professor Montague the prime interest of philosophy is in "ways of things" rather than in "ways of knowing."

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BOOK REVIEWS

Der Wiener Kreis. VICTOR KRAFT. Wien: Springer-Verlag. 1950. vi, 179 pp. $2.50.

This account of the history and achievements of the Vienna Circle up to the time of its final dispersal in 1938 is the product of a loving but critical piety. The author is professor of philosophy at the University of Vienna, and is one of the few survivors in that city of the remarkable discussion group which Schlick had gathered around himself. Dr. Kraft writes with undisguised and justified pride in the method of philosophizing and in the accomplishments of the Circle; and he expounds with sympathetic care a variety of views embraced by members of the group, even when he dissents from them. The members of the Circle were not irrevocably committed to a fixed set of theses, and they disagreed

among themselves on fundamental issues. In consequence, Dr. Kraft is compelled to devote much attention to shifts in doctrine that occurred during the life of the group. But because little of the relevant literature subsequent to the outbreak of the war was accessible to him, there are only a few references to more recent changes in positivistic analysis.

The book falls quite naturally into two parts: an account of the views of the Circle on the nature of formal logic, the foundations of mathematics, and the analysis of language; and a survey of doctrines on the logic of empirical science. The first part is devoted largely to critical expositions of the ideas of Wittgenstein, Schlick, and Carnap's *Logical Syntax of Language,* but includes some discussion of the turns in thought which grew out of developments in semantics. The second part begins with a careful critique of Carnap's *Aufbau,* goes on to a consideration of the views of Schlick, Wittgenstein, Carnap, Neurath, and Popper on issues in the analysis of meaning, truth, and probability, and concludes with a survey of problems raised by the thesis of physicalism, by value judgments, and by the linguistic approach to philosophic analysis.

Dr. Kraft's own position on these various matters is not explicitly formulated or argued. But it is clear from his many critical remarks that he subscribes to a "moderate" variety of positivism, closer to the "realistic" version of Schlick than to that of the earlier Carnap. He notes quite justly that the main achievement of the Vienna Circle, as far as its philosophy of logic is concerned, is to have shown how an apriorism with respect to the formal sciences is compatible with a thoroughgoing empiricism. He is sceptical of any phenomenalism such as is embodied in Carnap's *Aufbau,* and he has serious reservations concerning the thesis of a radical physicalism. He recognizes the limitations of a purely syntactical approach to philosophical problems, though he appears to think (with perhaps unwarranted optimism) that semantical analysis as currently practiced will suffice to correct the inadequacies of syntactical formalism. Dr. Kraft has written a useful and informative book, one which is a reminder of a happier time in the hopes of his generation of men. But the book is dated in another way. For in the perspective of the twenty-odd years that have elapsed since some of the views it expounds were under vigorous discussion, it is difficult to imagine them as live issues.

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The Elements of Mathematical Logic. PAUL C. ROSENBLOOM. New York: Dover Publications. 1950. iv, 214 pp. $2.95.

This is a welcome and valuable addition to the growing number of texts in mathematical logic. However, it is not a conventional introduction to the subject, addressed to the tyro in mathematics. For Professor Rosenbloom's well-conceived and well-executed aim is to exhibit the *present* state of this area of study, and therefore to present in systematic fashion some of the amazing advances that have occurred in the field during the past twenty-odd years (largely because of the work of professional mathematicians rather than of philosophically trained students)—advances which for the most part have been reported thus far only in monographic periodical publications. Accordingly, though the book begins with familiar and elementary matters, the exposition is fairly abstract from the start and assumes considerable mathematical maturity. Thus, the first chapter on the logic of classes gives an account of the work of Stone and Tarski on abstract Boolean algebras. The logic of propositions is discussed in the second chapter, but with emphasis on the generalized treatment developed by Tarski in his papers on deductive systems; and in addition there are compact expositions of many-valued calculi, of modal systems, and of the intuitionistic logic of Heyting and others. The third chapter is devoted to the logic of propositional functions; in addition to the presentation of the more familiar Russell approach, it includes accounts of the combinatory logic of Church and Curry, of Quine's device of "stratification" as an alternative to Russell's theory of types, of Zermelo's method for handling the paradoxes, and of the role of the axiom of choice in mathematical reasoning. The final chapter discusses the general syntax of language, and expounds among other things the fundamental work relevant to this theme of Goedel, Church, and Post—especially of the latter, since one of the objectives of the book is to obtain a wider recognition and appreciation of Post's contributions. Professor Rosenbloom's presentations are uniformly clear, and are accompanied by useful guides to the literature; and each section is followed by many exercises—some of considerable difficulty—to test the student's comprehension and skill. However, since the book covers a vast amount of material in relatively brief compass, it can be read profitably only by those who are prepared to give it close and sustained attention. It is not an introduction to a general philosophy of formal logic; but it is the only book now in print which carries the reader to the frontiers of current researches on formal systems.

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The Philosophy of Mathematics. EDWARD A. MAZIARZ. New York: Philosophical Library. 1950. viii, 286 pp. $4.00.

Although Dr. Maziarz nowhere explicitly defines the task of the philosophy of mathematics, it is clear from his book that he conceives it as the objective of such an inquiry to describe in general terms the historical and psychological genesis of mathematical ideas, the subject-matter of mathematics, and the character of mathematical reasoning. However, only a small part of the volume is devoted to the direct discussion of these questions. By far the greater portion consists of a history of the philosophy of mathematics, and of bibliographical references to its extensive literature. The book thus supplies thumbnail sketches of the relevant ideas of philosophical commentators on mathematics from Pythagoras down to current writers; but despite the learning this survey exhibits, it cannot be said that this part of the volume is in any way illuminating. Moreover, in his systematic treatment of problems Dr. Maziarz is simply a spokesman for Thomistic scholasticism. He spends much space in repeating the scholastic distinctions between metaphysics, physics, mathematics, and logic, and in expounding the traditional scholastic doctrine on the nature of mathematical abstraction. Only one short chapter deals specifically with some of the issues raised by current researches on the foundations of mathematics, and an attempt is made to resolve these issues in terms of the scholastic doctrine that

> There is, in things, the real accident of quantity inseparably joined to an existing substance with concomitant accidents of color, taste, weight and shape; in mathematics, the mind actualises only the formality of substance and quantity by abstraction, thus making the potential formality in the thing an intelligible formality and denominating quantified substance as a scientific object.

Since, however, the discussion accepts the distinctions and assumptions of Thomistic philosophy without subjecting them to a thoroughgoing analysis, and without arguing carefully their relevance to the contemporary debate, it hardly seems likely that the book will carry conviction to those not already persuaded.

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I fondamenti della filosofia classica. FRANCESCO OLGIATI. Milano: Società Editrice "Vita e Pensiero." 1950. xi, 310 pp. L. 1000.

Monsignor Olgiati, professor of philosophy at the University of the Sacred Heart in Milan, may be considered as the official

exponent of contemporary Italian Neo-Thomism. He has done very good work in the field of the history of modern philosophy, and he declares that this book contains the ultimate results of his many years of research and teaching. A comparison with other Neo-Thomist scholars (first and foremost, with Gilson and his latest book on being and existence) shows that Mons. Olgiati is less original and less profound than other Neo-Thomists. He limits his scope to a restatement of well-known positions, defending them rather than improving on them. This book is rather an apology than an independent essay, and unfortunately Mons. Olgiati undertakes the defense in a polemical spirit so that his book is mainly devoted to a criticism of opposite teachings. A criticism done in the spirit of the lawyer rather than of the philosopher, which verges often on the *argumentum ad hominem* and uses even non-philosophical means, irony and sarcasm, so as to show throughout an unseemly light-hearted vein which can not add anything to the final force of the argument.

By "classical philosophy" Mons. Olgiati means the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle as finally interpreted by St. Augustine and St. Thomas—a philosophy dealing with the problem of being instead of the problem of knowing as "modern" philosophy does, and considering being as *concrete* being in the Aristotelian way. A rather one-sided distinction, as indeed this would exclude "modern" philosophers (from Campanella and Spinoza and Leibniz to Hegel and Nicolai Hartmann and the existentialists) who concentrated their research on the ultimate nature of being.

This does not mean that "classical philosophy" was wrong—or right. It means only that Mons. Olgiati's classification and conception of this philosophy is one-sided and insufficient—is inspired by polemical aims rather than by a scientific outlook. It implies indeed the assumption of the "intelligibility of being," which makes it similar to modern ontologies grounded upon an epistemological basis. In simple terms, one does not see any clearcut distinction between this "classical philosophy" and Hegel's assumption that anything real is rational. You may call Aristotle's position "intellectualism," Hegel's "logicism"—the difference is not deep and it depends ultimately on the conception of logic in the general ontological structure.

Just on this point Mons. Olgiati's position seems untenable. According to him (pp. 142–165) logical principles are laws of being as such because they are "forms" of thought, and thought belongs to being. This is reasoning in a circle—being is intelligible, intellect is *a kind* of being, logic is "the form" of intellect, logical principles are laws of being. Moreover, the argument is open to

the argument of idealistic logic ("content-" or "act-" logic), that the distinction between act of thought and its logical form is an abstraction, and "formal" logic an empty, analytical description (Hegel, Gentile) with no possible reference to "concrete" thought and therefore to essential being.

On the other hand, Mons. Olgiati's interpretation does not allow for Aristotle's own conception of the connection logic-ontology, which started indeed from logic as a form of thought but established logic in its own right and based it on the (syllogistically undemonstrable) principle of non-contradiction, supported by a reference to the non-contradictory nature of particular, concrete being as the perfect, indissoluble blend of form and matter. Logic was indeed more deeply and directly involved in the nature of being than Mons. Olgiati's question-begging conception may show. One may consider Aristotle's conception (and Hegel's similar point of view) more useful or at least thought-provoking as to ontological research because it puts the problem of the ultimate connection of logic and being directly as a problem (perhaps, *the* problem) of being.

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Fuentes del Pensamiento de los Estados Unidos. ANGÉLICA MENDOZA. México: El Colegio de México. 1950. xvi, 276 pp.

Thought in Miss Mendoza's book means much more than either philosophic or scientific thought. It almost stands for manner of being, world outlook, consciousness, behavior. In this sense her work represents an investigation into the very roots of the American way of life, and is of singular significance. Miss Mendoza's research is not, however, the equivalent of a source book on American thought, as its title naturally leads the reader to believe. It is not the type of work that Diels, Gomperz, Burnet, or Bakewell did on Greek philosophy. Yet, the title of *"Fuentes"* (Sources) is not totally unwarranted, for running as a symphonic theme throughout the twelve chapters of her book is the position that the American way of life is but a flowering of the conflicting ideas and ideals held sacred by our forefathers in the three preceding centuries. The foregoing statement is not intended to exhaust the wealth of Miss Mendoza's ideas, which in themselves are remarkable for quantity and quality, but merely represents a preliminary, synoptic view of the text. The following titles or chapters suggest the central themes which have attracted Miss Mendoza's

observation: I. Puritanism (Thought and Way of Life); II. Puritanical Methodology (Its Technique for Spiritual Salvation); III. The Cambridge Platonists (Puritanism and Modernism in their ethics); IV. Decline of Puritanism (Mysticism of Jonathan Edwards); V. Philosophy of the Enlightenment (Franklin's Practical Morality); VI. Puritanism and Romanticism in Emerson (Nature, Spirit, Man); VII. The Doctrine of Freedom (Destiny and Mission of the People); VIII. Adventure, Pioneering and Expansion (The Wild and Romantic West); IX. Era of Utopias (Free Thought and Social Reform); X. Dramatic Contradiction (Financial Titanism and the Social Gospel); XI. From the Primacy of Action to Metaphysical Theism; XII. Idealism (The Realm of Essence). A bibliography of primary sources for each of the corresponding chapters enhances the last eight pages of the book, the Spanish entries for chapter VIII being a fundamental contribution to American philosophical bibliography. Secondary and general sources are not listed, but many are mentioned as footnotes throughout the text.

The whole book reads like a dramatic novel, especially her magnificent treatment of "the wild and romantic west" (chapter VIII), rich in epic overtones; her discussion of Jonathan Edwards' mystical experience and background (particularly pp. 63–65), delightfully lyrical; and her presentation of Santayana's philosophy (chapter XII), done with creative sympathy and penetrating insight. Notwithstanding the solidity, depth, and beauty of Miss Mendoza's work, however, certain errors of definition and observation tend to obscure her brilliant piece of research. We are told, for example, and not always elegantly (pp. 23–24, 27, 36, 218), that self-scrutiny, introspection, and self-knowledge, "typical of protestantism" (p. 218), hardened the American heart (p. 23), making the individual cruel, dispassionate, impersonal (p. 24). We learn that the self-analysis of Protestantism has killed in the individual all sense of charity, "medieval and Catholic virtue" (p. xv), for according to Protestantism "Charity is destructive and detrimental to society inasmuch as it protects the helpless." "It is even subversive, for it undermines the bases of our society established upon the principles of property and competition" (*ibid.*). We have no charity. Charity is individual, personal, disinterested. But we have philanthropy, which in turn is civic, social, and amply beneficial (p. xiii). The Social Gospel, especially as typified by the Methodist Church (p. 205), attempts to recover our already lost Christian charity (pp. 202–203). We learn that we are devoid of Christian "love of neighbor," *charitas*, in the first place, because

of the introspectionism characteristic of early puritanism which degenerated into selfishness (p. 27), scepticism, and nihilism (p. 71); and, in the second place, because of the theological justification of economic inequality characteristic of Protestant thought (p. 29). These are facts especially typical of early Protestantism in America, "but the seed of this ethical doctrine is still alive, and the style or valuation of existence which we call *the American way*, feeds on it" (p. 29). We are told that inasmuch as Protestantism departed from the tradition of institutional religion (Roman Catholic), it is both anti-historical and irrational (p. 110). Indeed the core of Miss Mendoza's book and the persistent theme running throughout her message centers on the thesis that the ethics of Roman Catholicism is historical, rational, and concerned with eternity, while the ethics of Protestantism is irrational, anti-historical and earthly minded (pp. xiv, 7, 23, 28, 110, 160, 180, 183, 185, 179, 207, 211, 255). In America "no one mentions death, and no one believes in eternity" (p. xv). The present reviewer supposes that by "irrational" Miss Mendoza means "empirical," but this would be a false opposition, for rational and empirical are not contradictory terms. Having traced the historical unfolding of Protestant ethics, as the second part of her thesis Miss Mendoza intuits and constructs what she considers to be the *American way of life,* the American *Weltanschauung,* "American Thought." Her description of American life, institutions, and ideals, does not in the least penetrate into the typical American home, school, church, or American community. Her comments on religion in America are, therefore, external and superficial, negative and irrelevant, while her appraisal of American charity in the sense of neighborly love and sacrificial sharing with fellow men in need and distress, is unutterably unfair. The foregoing remarks, however, are not intended to minimize the importance of Miss Mendoza's achievement. They are merely friendly recognition of conspicuous weaknesses. On the positive side, *Fuentes del Pensamiento de los Estados Unidos* sparkles with such jewels as her *ad rem* observations on philosophical naturalism (p. x), pragmatism (pp. 209–210), the Personalism of Emerson (pp. 112–114, 120, 124, 140, 141), and her accurate presentation of George Santayana (pp. 247–268). Miss Mendoza's *Fuentes* is a picture of the struggles, inconsistencies, failures and achievements, tragedy and epic of the American soul as seen from the outside, and as such it deserves a place of prominence in American bibliography.

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NEW BOOKS

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HUSS, ERNEST-PETER: *Das Gesetz des Seins. Philosophischer Entwurf der universalen Sinn-Deutung, aufgebaut auf dem Grund-Gesetz aller Weltentwicklung, naturwissenschaftlich gerechtfertigt durch die gesicherten Forschungsergebnisse der Atom- und Astro-Physik, der Chemie, Astronomie und Biologie, religiös gerechtfertigt durch die Aussagen der reinen christlichen Lehre.* Stuttgart und Köln: W. Kohlhammer Verlag. 1951. xiv, 317 pp. DM 24.

NOTES AND NEWS

The Metaphysical Society of America held its annual meeting at Yale University on March 22, 1952. The new officers are: President, Paul Weiss (re-elected); Treasurer, Constantine Cavarnos (re-elected); Secretary, Oliver Martin. John Wild was elected as a new member of the Council.

Membership is open to anyone interested in the Society. Dues are $1.00 a year. Communications are to be addressed to the Secretary, Professor Oliver Martin, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, Rhode Island.

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